

**Testimony of Francine Lowe before the Government Reform Committee Hearing
“Under Fire: Does the District of Columbia’s Gun Ban Help or Hurt the Fight
Against Crime?”
June 28, 2005**

I am Francine Lowe. I am an employee of the Sanitation Department of the D.C. Department of Public Works. I am proud to be a native Washingtonian. All seven of my children, four girls and three boys, ranging in ages from 4 to 20, were also born in the District of Columbia. I am asking Congress to leave our gun laws alone in the name of my daughter Myesha, who at 15 was an innocent bystander who was shot and killed on July 24th a little over a year ago. I testify here today because it is the least I can do. But I come in great sadness because my family and I have not gotten over and will never get over Myesha’s death by gunfire. However, we never thought that action to give us further pain would or could be taken. Yet Congress keeps trying to repeal our gun safety laws. Does Congress think that repealing our gun laws will save children like Myesha? Many mothers like me are raising their children in tough neighborhoods in D.C. know otherwise. If Congress makes it even easier for residents to have guns, there will be more mothers like me and more children like Myesha.

We had much hope for my wonderful daughter, Myesha. She was what mothers want daughters to be, bright and polite as she could be. Myesha was an honor roll student. She had just graduated from Hine Junior High School and would have moved on to Dunbar this year. Myesha and her sister Rasheida were in the Trinity College Upward Bound program. That Monday her Upward Bound group was going on a tour of colleges.

Myesha had permission from her grandmother to go to a favorite neighborhood fast food store the evening of July 24th. Some kids drove by and had words with an occupant of the car. All agree that Myesha was not in the dispute and was not the intended victim, but it was Myesha who took a bullet in her head. When I got to the hospital, Myesha was already dead. My heart started aching then and hasn’t stopped.

Anyone with a teenage child knows that a gun in the house would be almost impossible to keep from a teenager. There is a saying that you can run but you can’t hide. You can hide the gun and lock it up, but if anyone can get to it, a teenager will get to it. I know there will be people who will think a gun at home will protect them, but anyone who knows our city knows that the gun is more likely to be pulled out and used to cause a tragedy in the home.

A gun caused a terrible tragedy in my family. The last thing we need in this city is more guns, legal or illegal, in homes or in the streets. Please do not pass legislation to repeal our gun laws.